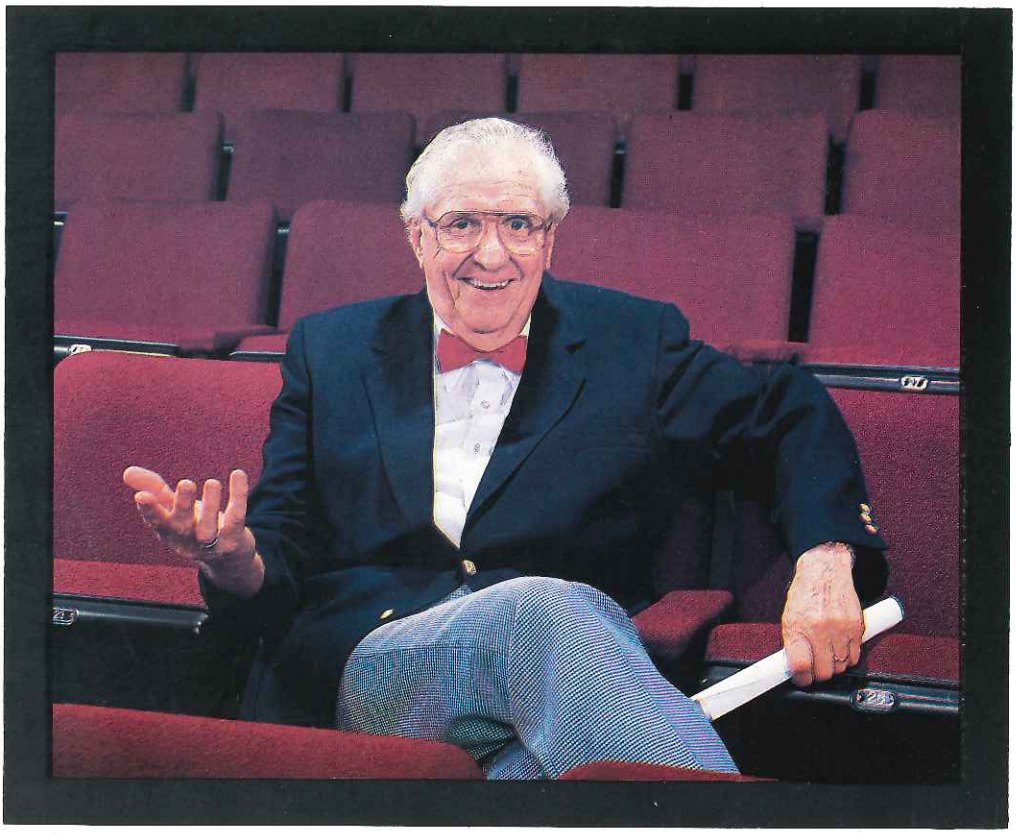
Apollo's Lute



Apollo's Lute
is dedicated
to
Mr. Watson B. Duncan III
Distinguished Chair of Arts and Letters
February 16, 1915 - February 21, 1991



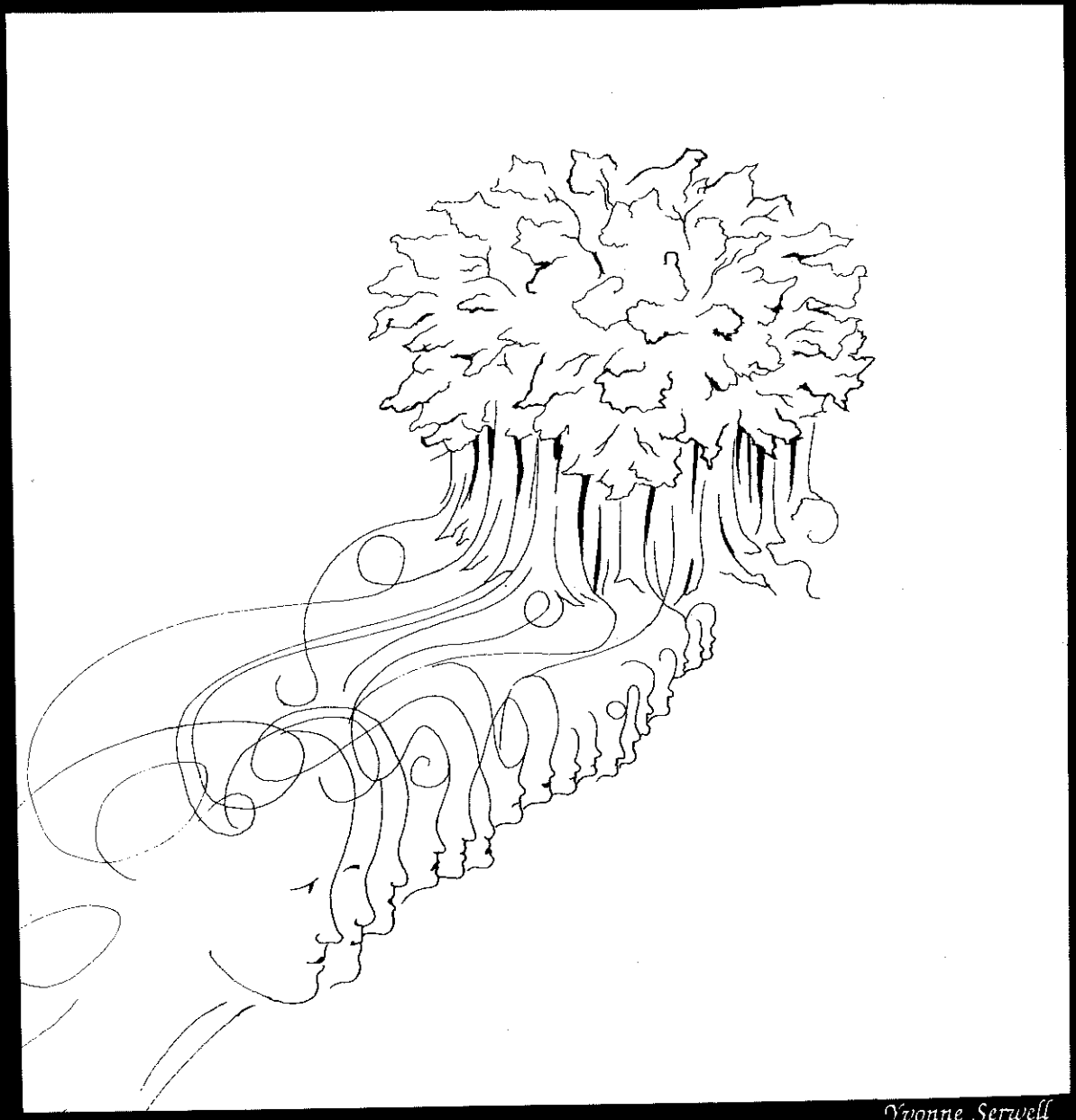
Soundless

When a heart breaks
No sudden cry is heard
So warn the thoughtless passer-by
A tragedy has occurred
For a heart breaks
Slowly as the buds unfold
When its burden of grief
Grows too heavy to hold.

Watson B. Duncan III
Vol. IV, 1960

PALM BEACH COMMUNITY COLLEGE

APOLLO'S LUTE



Yvonne Serwell

Vol. II Edition II

1991-1992

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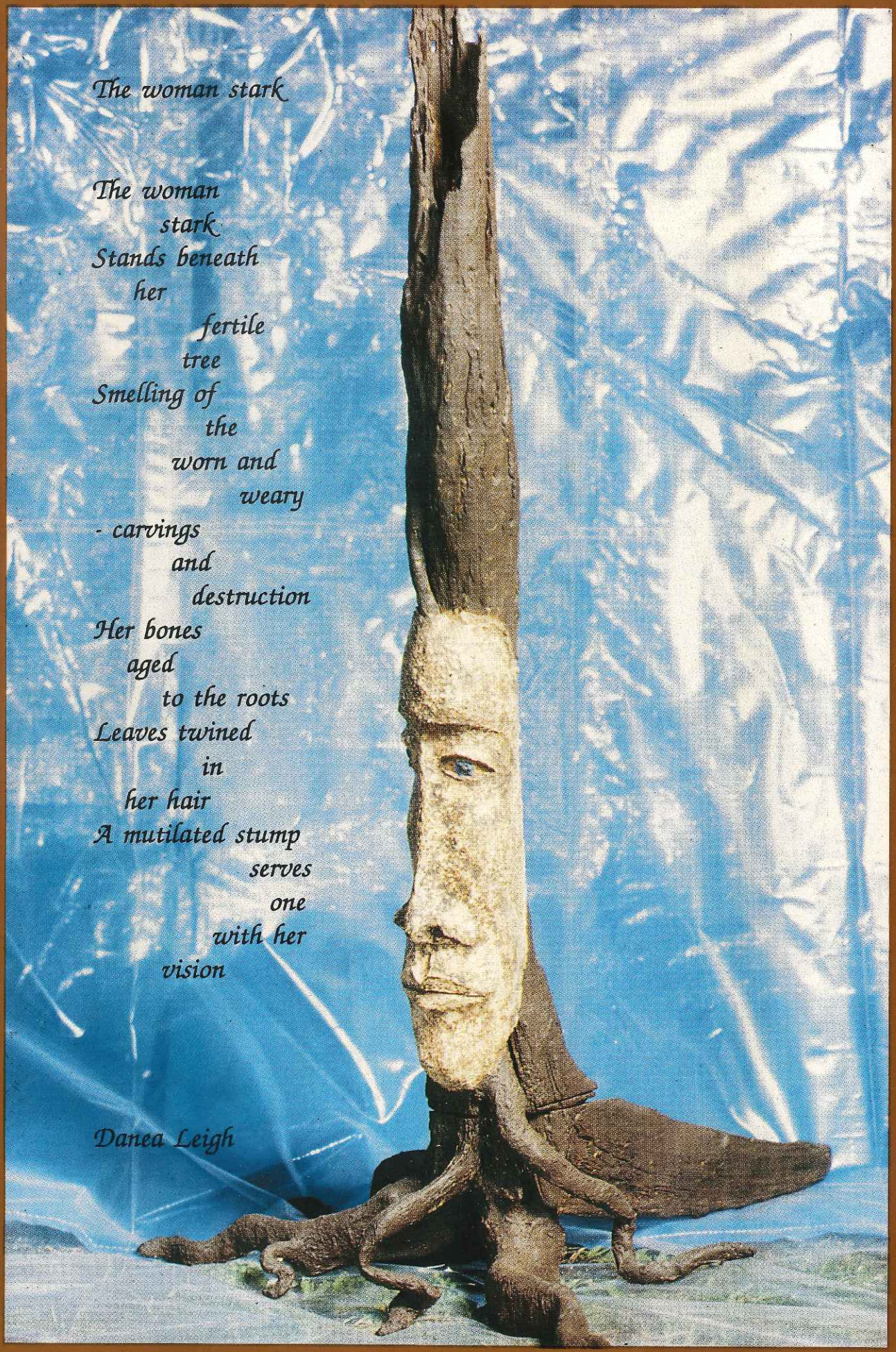
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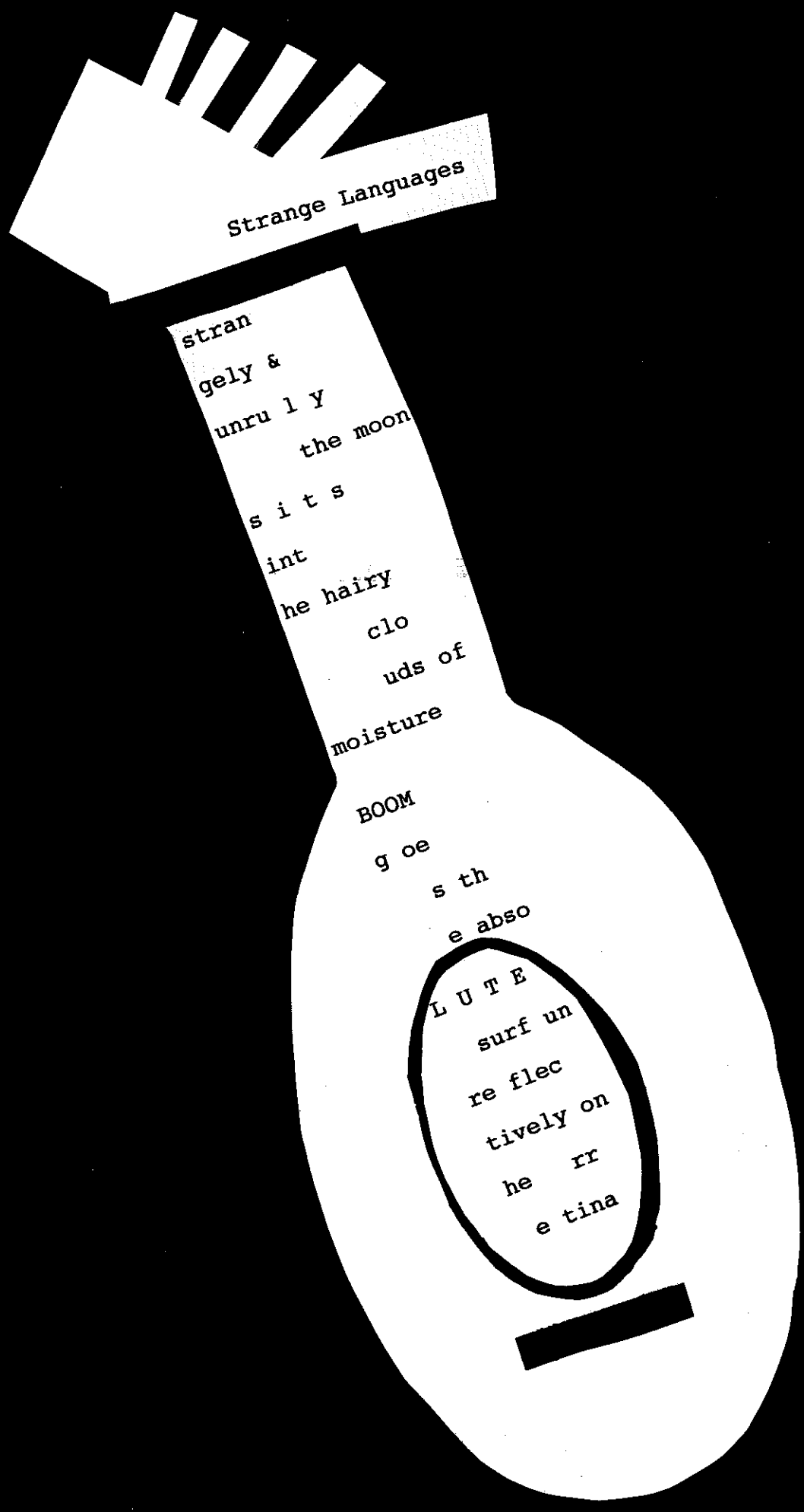
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Tracy Shapiro with "The Terrorist"

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The woman stark
The woman
stark
Stands beneath
her
fertile
tree
Smelling of
the
worn and
weary
- carvings
and
destruction
Her bones
aged
to the roots
Leaves twined
in
her hair
A mutilated stump
serves
one
with her
vision
Danea Leigh


Strange Languages
stran
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Indian Summer Rain

Legions and legions come softly.
Droplets gather in the purse of a leaf.
The sky is gutted with the wrinkles of weather -
Stoic tears of an indian eye.

Doors of Perception

tunnels
of darker, more mystic
shadows shoot
through the silent trees
like veins through a mythic monster.

My Parade

myself i am a product
of a mystic interaction
between satelite soul &
beacon flesh.

Alberto Martin



Natural Selection

In the darkness of beginning
we tottered through the forest
undiapered
and sucking at earth's breast.

Trees were turned to totems;
spirits rattled feathered bones,
reigning supreme.

Leopard skins
and zebra pelts
were belted with
thin reeds,
and seeds were found to grow.

The upright beast
built altars
of stacked stones.
They called the spirits down
to bless their gift, the grain,
and make it grow again.

The Spirit spoke
in promise of new day
from the seed of David.
He hummed his songs
and strummed his lyre
and fathered a new realm.

The spirits spoke
in many ways
until the Dayspring dawned.
He called them to His throne
and made them one.
Now He reigns supreme.

Selah.

Cherise Wyneken

The Silent Slayer

Foreboding shadows announce your path and intention
Malevolent rendezvous - your secret quest
Procreating nocuous self - your vile intention
Sapping innocence and life, trust and rest.

Demise pales beneath your weighty breath
Its sweet release escapes my pinioned soul
Incestuous maligning - most ferocious death
Corrupts my heart - gaining fixed control.

Heinous dregs with noisome chains
Weeping children indict your putrid frame
Inscribed in bloody fear, tears and pains
Unsuspecting ploys in your nocturnal game.

Stolen childhood and nightmares for memory
Slaying the unguarded with no regret
Noted elder submerged in venery
Tempestuous cravings loathed yet met.

Contempt has fallen on the python's pate
Imposing vengeance shall ne'er repay
The impending doom - the sacrificial fate
Unsurrendered darkness in the of day.

D.S. Gates

Lilith

O! Lilith, deep, dreaming Demoness, a
Lover's mate by seduction lull.
Though chains through angel's names agreed you shun,
Prideful! no subordinate post ye bay.
Wandering the wildness, lurking betrothed
To unholy beasts: animals of men.
An apostate past, pleasured whore now loathed;
Such unworthiness decreed living sin.
A more truthful likeness are your offspring
Than the lies pervasive: children of men.
Drifting, void limitation's dark, dull ring,
Cursed are you as truth is tinged and hidden.
Is an equal? Must it be when above,
That your heart's not fallen even in Love?



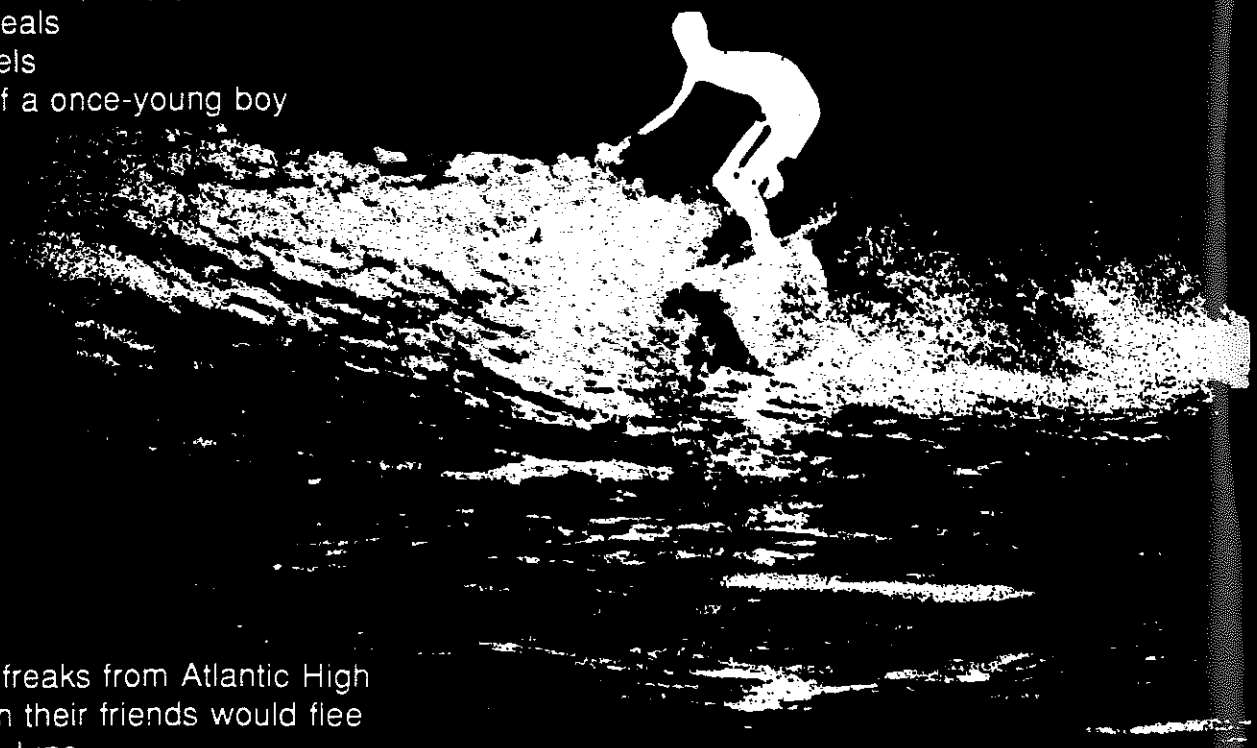
Chris Warren

Ghost Surfers

In Delray Beach when the summer moon's
Just a slice in the charcoal sky
And the stars are dark
Without sign of spark
And dreams and tide are high

A crew of wraith-like surfers ride
The crests of the inkblack waves
And their ghastly white
Casts an eerie light
On the sea that conceals their graves

Not a sound they make as the combers break
Not a shout nor a whoop of joy
For the night conceals
What a spectre feels
Who's the ghost of a once-young boy



They were surfing freaks from Atlantic High
Who'd go out when their friends would flee
And they died one June
When a wild typhoon
Blew their boards and themselves to sea

And local lore says they haunt this shore
In their search for the perfect wave
For the ride that will reach
To the sandy beach
And permit them to leave their grave

Many nights they've tried since that year they died
But their hopes have grown dim and cold
For they're caught in a spell
Between Heaven and Hell
And they'll surf till the world grows old.

Owen Murphy

Moscow Winter Florida Heat

A body, flaming
ice crackling motion
like the Neva before dawn,
stands ritualistically tourist on Red Square
to pay homage to Lenin.

A voice mumbles through dissident fog,
"This is our fifth Lenin,"
before retreating nervously
into fur-lined warmth.

Hands cannot hide from the cold.
Electricity skips through toes
half-stepping into the tomb,
a brown marble home
reflecting St. Sophia's candy house domes.

Eyes adjust and focus on guards
angling towards corners of Lenin's windex -
shine glass coffin.

A body, flaming
ice crackling
like the Neva before dawn,
leans over the ice cold corpse and whispers,
"How much longer can we both endure?"

Patricia Johnson



SKYDIVE

With a shout of triumph, Edward Andrews flung his rugged, six-foot body from the open plane door into the rushing space thousands of feet above the green, mottled earth blanket. He laughed into the wind at the thought of the parachute on his back and the pack full of money strapped to his belly.

From the skydiver's "flying" position, he even tried a few backflips and

rollovers in his glee at the success of his plan. God, he was clever! Nobody else could have done it -- only he had the brains and the brass to pull it off.

Once again he had beaten the suckers. And there would never be any evidence to point to him. He gave a war whoop and flipped another rollover, as he remembered the bodies of the pilot and the co-pilot slumped over the control wheels on their one-way trip down.

His whole life had just been a preparation for this moment. All those heists and bashed heads and back-alley hits were pretty good fun, but this...! This was really something! He had just set himself up for life by befriending that jerk of a co-pilot so he could hitch a ride. He had discovered that the bank's private plane was regularly used to transfer money from the central site to branches in towns scattered throughout mountains.

He giggled and flapped his arms. Hey...if he could do what he'd just done, he could probably fly too! Man, this was a real rush...

Almost time to pull the rip cord. Jeez, he hated to stop the best rush ever, but suddenly that blanket below didn't look so soft. This spot was between mountains, but the valley grass might provide a rough landing if he didn't pull the cord pretty damn quick. There, he had it, and now for a yank...

"Oh, shiiiittt!" he screamed as the cord came away in his hand. The flat, grey eyes relaxed, however, as he remembered the reserve chute. Another quick jerk and, unbelievably, no result.

"No! No! No!" burst from his lungs. He'd never lost a deal yet. This couldn't be happening. But here it came.

His mind flashed to last year's sky-diving class and a whimsical Plan for Emergencies. He had read somewhere that some law of physics said a falling object hit with less force per square inch if it landed flat, rather than if it landed on one end or at one point. He knew he'd never have to use it, but the Plan was to arrange to fall flat on his back. He had laughed at the time, but he had filed it away as "just in case".

All of sudden "just in case" was horribly eminent. All right! He'd never been beaten and he wouldn't start now. With a quick little smirk, he took time to think, "I'll be famous! Now, straighten out, big breath..." For one instant, Andrews felt his curly hair tickle his forehead, as the breeze swished past his helmet. He felt the runway earth thundering toward him, and then...

A sudden silence and an instant cessation of movement. "Come on," thought Andrews. "Get this over with." But nothing happened. He opened his eyes cautiously. He looked around. He was still in the air! He wasn't falling anymore! In fact, he floated around in his sky-divers suit like a kid in an inner tube or like a fishing bobber.

What the hell was going on?!

A kick of his feet sent him floating across the cool air. An outflung arm turned him sideways.

Andrews looked down and stared as the earth receded! More tentative motions

followed. Flapping his arms produced a high, curving swoop toward the sun. Andrews whooped and laughed wildly. He could fly!

Darting, flitting, soaring, flying, Andrews played in the sky with glee. Man, he had it all now! Get outta his way -- he was IT; he had POWER.

Shrugging out of the confining straps and buckles of the sky-diving rig, Andrews giggled. How about some more of those backflips and rollovers?

Backward and down, he twisted in an earthward dive. There was that high valley again. It still looked like a soft, green blanket, but what was that dark blotch he saw off to the right? Andrews thought it looked like a man lying there in the grass, but the shape was a little weird.

In fact, a lot of things were weird, all of a sudden. Colors were off, as though he were seeing through clouded glass. That mountain over there had snow on it a while ago, but now smoke swirled from the top.

"That's enough of this," thought Andrews, as he kicked and waved his arms. But he was still headed down! Hey!

He fell closer and closer to the blotch in the valley. His eyes widened in horror, for he recognized the blotch as a real body dressed in HIS flight suit and helmet, a body surrounded by dark red fluid soaking the grass.

The free fall came to a sudden halt with Andrews suspended google-eyed, his neck hairs rising in fear. He screamed, but no sound disturbed the silent valley.

A trickle of warm air brushed his face, and a faint sound of laughter set every hair at attention. He felt his body swinging upward once again, and the laughter grew. Higher and higher, faster and faster he went, struggling against the pull he could not see.

Suddenly the smoking mountain opened and Andrews was surrounded by smoke, flames, and sulfuruos fumes billowing from a boiling, red maw. The laughter rose to a horrendous din of raucous, mocking howls.

Andrews hung there, screaming and struggling, flapping his arms and kicking. From out of the maw came a rumbling growl, "Fly, Andrews, fly!" And he began to drop into the Cauldron.

Mary Crawley

A Fallen Angel

I could hear the heavy footsteps echo against the cold walls. The clumping got closer while I sat on the bottom bunk with a rolled cigarette squeezed between my fingers; it finally hit me - my last day. So many unwanted days of waiting for freedom from the grey walls, steel bars, and the constant smell of decay. The boots got closer and my heart got faster. Slapping some outstretched hands that yearned for my freedom was the best farewell I could do. My time was up.

With all my documents stamped and last possessions handed over in a crumpled bag, I walked out into the streets. The cold air surrounded my

body. A haunting greeting from the world that didn't care. Grey steam danced out of sidewalk vents. Hidden in this steam the occasional bagman sat talking to himself. Rain started to fall and misted over my body while my mind wandered back to the days of my buddies and getting high. Nothing else mattered then. Getting heroin and fogging our minds was a part of our daily lives.

I glanced at the people in store windows, able to talk to strangers as if they had no past. "Why does my past haunt me?" I asked myself. I don't even know what time it is. Life seemed simpler in prison. I just had to watch my back and eat. I can see everything around me but I'm not part of this world. All my buddies are gone, and John stopped visiting after a month. I never loved him anyway.

"Jo-Jo?" Someone yelled from behind. I turned around to see this guy in a long dark coat. The rain had matted his dark hair. All I could see were these dark eyes that had greenish circles around them.

"So it is you. When did you get out of the hole?" He questioned. Who was this person?

"Did they cut your tongue out?" He asked impatiently.

"No." I breathed. Why was I so scared? He took a step closer to me and I could smell him. He reeked of booze and of decay, like he kept a sandwich in his pocket too long.

"You don't even remember me do you? I'm Kenny. It ain't that cold to be shakin'." He accused. Then it came back to me. He was always the one that had the late night drug for that fix one needed towards the end of a rough night.

"So how are ya?" I groveled. I didn't know what to say.

"Fine and better by the minute. I got dilaudin. I know you used to crawl on your knees for that shit. You want some?" He offered.

"I never crawled on my knees." I stammered.

"Do you want some or not?" He demanded. At that moment my hands began to grip my brown bag. My heart leaped at the offer. What was I going to do? Nothing seemed to change. We just stood in the rain with the distant echo of frustrated cars honking their horns.

"I only got twenty dollars on me and I'm kind of hungry. No place to stay either. So I'm gonna go, ok, man?" I explained.

"Don't worry about it Jo-Jo. This one's on the house. You can stay at my place until you're on your feet again. I know what it's like to get outta the slammer and nobody's there." He told me. With this all out, my body began to relax. The decision was made. How could I give up an opportunity like this? I'd only do it this once.

We entered a shattered looking building. Following Kenny up the narrow staircase with a dusty light bulb for light; I had this feeling I was being watched, but nobody was there. I looked around his place. There was trash everywhere. Old syringes were lined up on a dusty windowsill. Overflowing ashtrays and the occasional piece of jewelry or gadgets to look at. All of it was lifeless junk that belonged to a junkie.

"You want me to do you first?" He motioned with the needle all ready to go.

"No, that's okay, man." I whispered. I could leave now before it started. And yet I didn't move out of the dusty chair.

"See you on the moon!" He laughed. He had hardly any teeth left. Kenny didn't get bothered by much.

Looking out the window, I watched the traffic light change. The rain got heavier and slapped against the window panes. The wind screamed through the cracks, and it was hard to see out the window. I rolled up my sleeve and the set up came back to me. Slowly piercing my arm, finding a vein, I let the needle register in my arm. Slowly tapping the syringe, I had to keep the blood from clogging.

Within minutes my veins were opening and warmth rushed through my body. This numb feeling I had forgotten about while I was in jail. Staring over at Kenny I saw him nod out.

Reaching over I took another and shot up some more. One more couldn't hurt I thought. The second dose went to my head. I could see my mother standing in the corner of this dreary apartment with her Bible in her hand. Quickly shutting my eyes, I could hear laughter and the familiar clicking of the guard's boots getting closer. My breath grew short as if I was being squeezed out of the womb. A narrow tunnel was all I could see as if I was the poison in my veins.

"Help Kenny" I whimpered. I stumbled a bit and bile rose to my dry mouth. What happened to me? I used to shoot all the time. The room started to melt around me.

"Shit Kenny! Wake up you stupid f..k!" I cried.

He couldn't hear me in his secluded dream world of dilaudin. With this I dragged my body and put my head on his knee. It was the best I could do.

"Please....," I groaned. As my head began to slide off his knee. He opened his eyes.

"You feelin' hot, babe?" He drooled. Then his face changed. He looked closer at my eyes.

"No way man, you can't do this. Not here!" He screamed.

By this point I could only see him in kaleidoscope pieces. Darkness covered me. I could only hear him from a distant tunnel. He seemed upset about something. He was crying out for some kind of help. But who could really give a junkie help? He covered my mouth with his, but I could not feel his warmth only his coldness.

More people came around suddenly. Where was Kenny? They looked like angels that my mother sent to save me from this awful world. They raised my body into a soft stretcher. I could see them all fighting. But fighting for what? They were yelling at me to hold on. Hold onto what? My bag of possessions? I reached out to one of the angels and smiled.

Sydney Fox Saunders

LETTING GO

For every thing there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven.
Ecclesiastes 3:1

"Ah, it feels so good to stretch out and relax after a delicious dinner," I thought. I really should get up and get some Maalox for this heartburn though." As I shift to get up, I feel a crushing, intense pain in my chest, going out to my arms. I gasp, I try to call out, but can't. I am paralyzed. The pain is of such force that I am going numb. Am I in shock? What the hell is going on? I feel as if the breath has been knocked out of me. I feel feather-light, I am floating! I look down with horror to see my own pale, still body. " I should have lost weight and quit smoking," I muse. I laugh but no sound comes. I remember encouraging the dialysis patients I work with to live healthy lifestyles in order to live life to the fullest. "Looks like I should have taken my own advice."

Joanne comes out to kiss me goodnight, and sees that I am lying very, very still. "She's so beautiful, a very good wife. A little clinging and dependent, but that's just because she's so insecure." I am proud of how well I have taken care of her and sheltered her from difficulties.

"Nathan, are you ok?" Joanne whispers. Her face contorts and she screams in agony as she slaps me again and again. I feel nothing but see everything. I want to reach out and hold her. I want to her that I will take care of everything, that everything will be all right, but I am unable to speak. She puts her hand under my nose to see if I am breathing, and steps back in panic when she realizes I'm not. "What would Nathan do?" she murmurs, and then giggles hysterically. After a brief hesitation, she dials 911 and the horror begins.

I awaken with a start. I try again to open my eyes but I can't. I hear voices in the room and I strain to hear what they're saying. I hear Joanne saying "Exactly what happened?" I recognize the voice of her employer, Dr. Ahmed, as he replies, "Nathan not only suffered a heart attack, but he also had a seizure and aspirated some food into his lungs. Dr. Daniels, the neurologist, can tell you more." "This doesn't look very promising, Joanne," a new voice (Dr. Daniels?) states. "Your husband has a severe lung infection due to the aspiration, and he remains in a coma with minimal response to pain or tactile stimulation. I don't plan on treating him aggressively due to his poor neurological test results. We don't know exactly how long Nathan's heart was stopped when you found him."

Wait, it was only a few minutes. Not very long. I'm going to be fine, just you wait and see. A little heart attack isn't going to put me in the ground.

Everyone in the room is telling Joanne to prepare for the worst, to just let go. Don't listen to them, Honey. I'll be ok. I just need a little

rest, and I'll be good as new. I feel Joanne's hand clasping mine. I try to squeeze it to reassure her, but I can't. I feel something cool on my forehead, and summon all of my energy and miraculously, I turn my head -- just slightly, but I move, all the same. Joanne jumps. "Nathan, can you hear me?" she asks. "You're going to be OK, you have to be OK. I can't live without you." I'm so frustrated. I can't communicate no matter how hard I try. I hear some clicking noises, then my favorite music. The tension slowly drains from my body.

I hear the door open, and Dr. Ahmed's voice calling to Joanne. "You really must get some rest. Go home. I'll call you if there's any change." "Good night, Nathan. I love you. I'll be back soon," Joanne says. I feel so tired, so very tired.

"Nathan, I'm pregnant," Joanne said as tears welled up within her eyes. I grabbed her, hugged her wildly, ecstatically." A baby, my baby, our baby, how miraculous. I was impassioned. " I love you, Joanne. I want to marry you. I want a family. I'll take care of you and the baby, always. Let's make our dreams come true together..." "Happily ever after..." she sighed.

I awaken with a start, realizing that I've dozed off again. The scent of Joanne's perfume hangs in the air. She suddenly grabs my hand and places it on her now swollen abdomen. I feel our baby kicking, our son. It has to be a boy, I know it. Who knows, he may have to be the man of the house if I don't pull out of this.

"Well Nathan, you should be proud of me. I took the last Lamaze class tonight, and I'm actually being forced to make a decision on my own. I wish you were awake to talk to me, share with me. I love you so much. i need you." says Joanne wearily.

I can feel myself getting weaker, drifting away more and more. If only I could look at Joanne, see her face, then I would know if she would be able to deal with losing me, if she's ready to let go. I can't open my eyes, no matter how hard I try.

Why have I shielded her from all of life's responsibilities? How will she ever manage? I can't die, not yet, she's not ready. Joanne draws strength and energy from me. Even now, just by my being alive. Without it, I don't think she can survive. I remember when we first met, she was so sweet and giving. I didn't think I could ever love again, but boy did I fall for her. Her and her romantic ideas, living happily ever after. How I wish we could live happily ever after. But no, I don't think that will happen. I have to make sure Joanne is strong no matter what.

"Nathan, I'm so excited about being pregnant with our child. I practice my labor, breathing and relaxation exercises while I sit here with you. Please wake up, Nathan! I need you, what will the baby and I do without you?"

I feel a stabbing pain deep within my soul. I am dying. Joanne has to go on and be strong. I am so frustrated with being unable to communicate with her.

Where is she, she didn't come at all yesterday, it's got to be pretty late...the afternoon shift nurses are here now. Sometimes she makes me so mad. Doesn't she remember she's got a husband lying helpless here in the hospital? I sob silently, and feel overwhelming guilt. Joanne is doing what she has to, she's getting stronger, she's coping.

The door opens and Joanne says, "Hello, Nathan. Guess what? I went to a group meeting tonight. Some other people who have loved ones in long term intensive care. We all meet once a week to talk. I really feel good about this group. I feel stronger, and more in control.

I bet you feel in control. You've been ignoring me for the past three days.

I feel another pang of guilt. What right do I have to begrudge her independence. I have to be supportive, I want Joanne to be OK, I really do, deep down.

Joanne gasps, "Nathan, I think my water broke. I'm having a pain right now. I have to go. I'll be back as soon as I can. I love you."

Silence, dead silence, I wait and wait. I can feel my strength fading. It is as if Joanne really is drawing energy from me. She's going through so much without me. She must be getting stronger.

Why is it taking so long? There must be something wrong. Oh my God! Please don't let anything happen to Joanne or the baby. She's already been through so much.

The door to my room opens, then closes. Silence. Who is it? Who's there? Say something, Damn it! I recognize my mother-in-law's voice. "Nathan, can you even hear me? Well, Joanne insisted I do this, so here goes. You have a huge baby boy. He weighs nine pounds, three ounces. Joanne named him Eric. She had a very long, difficult labor. While she was in labor there was a problem with Eric's heart rate. He may have a heart problem. They're not sure yet. Joanne was so strong. She was in labor for a long time... she pushed for almost three hours, and then had to have a Caesarean section because Eric was having stress. You'd be so proud of her Nathan. She's really changed, she's so much more independent and self-reliant. Anyway, we just got one quick look at Eric before the nurses whisked him away to the neonatal intensive care unit. I don't know if you can hear me or not, Nathan, but congratulations. I'll be back to let you know how Eric and Joanne are doing."

I sigh inwardly with relief. Joanne has done it, delivered our baby, and he's going to be fine, just fine. I feel so tired again, I need to sleep. I awaken to Joanne's voice. "Thank you, Mama," she murmurs. "Nathan, I'm here. Eric is stable and I'm doing

better. Why aren't you waking up?" She lies her head down against my arm and begins to sob. "Oh, Nathan! I haven't given up hope! You'll get better, just wait and see." It's so unfair. I wanted us to be a family, to bring Eric home together.

Five days pass. Joanne comes to pay me her morning visit. "Eric and I can go home today," she reports. "The doctors won't let me bring him in to see you because of your lung infection. I've brought a picture of him. I'll put it on the table right here."

Weeks later. Joanne's visits are becoming less frequent. She has her hands full, taking care of Eric. "My life is starting to get into a routine, Nathan. Eric is such a joy, I wish you could be with us at home. I made a tape of Eric crying for you to hear." She's stronger, I can feel it. She's going on, she's almost ready to let me go. "The doctors say your lung infection has cleared up. I'll be able to bring Eric in to see you tomorrow." I tremble inwardly with anticipation. Finally, I will feel my son's touch. My awareness fades slowly with exhaustion.

I am awakened by the sound of an infant crying. Joanne says, "Nathan, Eric and I are here. Do you remember that adorable outfit that you picked out, the one with the whale on the front? I've dressed him in that. Oh, Nathan! Won't you wake up? Maybe you never will again."

Joanne carefully lays Eric on my chest. She pulls my arms about him in an embrace. I try to tighten my arms about him, but I can't. I'm so weak, so very weak.

"Nathan, if you can hear me, I want you to know that I love you so much. But I'm OK, really OK," she said with a catch in her voice. "Eric and I have lots of new friends. I know it will be hard for you to believe, but I'm taking care of things. I still have a ways to go to do as good a job as you, but I'm getting there."

I feel the warm weight of my son on my chest. I breathe in the pure, clean baby smell that surrounds him. I feel feather-light again, floating...

My eyes burn. I feel one lone tear emerge from my right eye and slowly travel down my cheek. I take a deep breath, slowly release it in a sigh. I feel truly at peace. My heart stops for the second and final time.

I watched my wife Joanne and my son Eric sit hugging my body, drawing the last bit of energy of my being from me. I would always remember this touching and poignant moment. I would remember the love Joanne and I shared. I knew I would remain in her thoughts as she went on to experience life together with Eric, our son, the symbol of our continuing love.

Monique Taylor

The Terrorist

The terrorist stares out the plane's window at the empty pavement. He pants. Too hot, he thinks. I cannot stand this, like baking in an oven. The passengers stare at him as he grabs for the bulkhead beside him. Damn heat waves make me dizzy, he thinks. "Stay in your seats," he shouts at the hostages. " Stay in your seats and you'll all be fine." He looks back out the window. Two hours I have already waited, but I can beat them, he thinks. I'll escape this with my friends and the money we need to continue the fight. No, they will not, cannot, let me win. But they know that defeating me, they will still lose, they'll still lose. I will win. I must win.

An old lady near the front whimpers.

He steps away from the bulkhead and announces, "They try to crush us in their fists. But we are like the earth after a rain, the harder they squeeze, the more slides through their fingers." He turns back into himself and leans against the bulkhead to rest.

Staring again out the window, he sees a little bird land on one of the propellers. It looks around, then flutters down to the pavement in search of seeds. It looks for little tufts of grass growing up through the tarmac, but it finds none and flies off to search elsewhere.

"Stay in your seats," the terrorist commands as he waves his revolver in the air. "I do not wish to hurt any of you, but you must all do as I say. We've been held here too long but it will soon be over." He pauses, then adds, "One way or another." The hostages all sit. Silent. Glued. Paralyzed. They are rabbits, he thinks, we are all rabbits, caged and waiting. He wipes the sweat off his forehead with his shirt sleeve.

Something stirs the hostages, and the terrorist follows their eyes out the window toward the terminal. A man walks slowly and methodically toward the stranded plane. He holds his hands on top of his head and appears unarmed. Hands still fastened to his head, he boards the plane, walking up each step easily and decisively. He stops just inside the door, then turns and faces the terrorist. The terrorist aims the revolver at the man's head. The man speaks. "We are meeting all your demands," he says as he glances at the hostages, and then at the terrorist. He leaves his hands on his head as the terrorist slowly walks down the aisle. He holds up the revolver in his right hand as he pats the official's shoulders and hips in search of weapons. Finding none, the terrorist retreats to his position in the front and motions the government official into an empty seat also near the front.

The official stares at the terrorist's sweat-stained clothes, but he remains silent.

"What do you want?" the terrorist says as he clenches his teeth.

"I'm here to represent our government and see that the hostages are not harmed while we prepare to meet your demands." He keeps his eyes on the terrorist. "If you have any further demands, you are to deal directly with me. I am



entrusted with the power to grant you what you desire."

The terrorist brushes his tangled hair back over his shoulders as the official's eyes parry his eyes. I do not like him, the terrorist thinks. I cannot trust him. His eyes, I cannot read his eyes. He could lie to his own mother without her ever suspecting. "You are meeting my demands?"

"We are," the official answers.

"You're lying. You always lie. I cannot trust you," he says, snapping his teeth like a cornered dog.

"You can trust us. You must trust us," the official says as he opens his arms to show that he hides nothing. "My life is forfeit if we lie."

The terrorist stares at him and grinds his teeth. "You'll release my comrades?"

"They are being escorted here right now," the official answers as he glances out the window.

He is looking, the terrorist thinks, for his snipers to see if they are in position. He must have men on top of the terminal and across the runway in the grass. Beads of sweat trickle down the terrorist's forehead, and he wipes them away with his shirt sleeve. His knees turn waxy, weakening in the heat, about to collapse. Heat is too much, he thinks and closes his eyes. Hold on, I must hold on. Keep my legs stiff. Slowly he reopens his eyes and aims them at the official. "Why did you come?" he asks.

"It is part of my job." Sweat begins to stain the official's clothes.

"What does your widow think of this job you have?"

"I am not married."

"I'm not either," the terrorist snarls. "I did not wish to bring new life into this world of suffering that you force upon us."

The official does not answer.

He is cool, the terrorist thinks, he is making me wait, wait till I crack like a nut in his fist. He has it all planned out. I just need to last a little longer, he thinks as he closes his eyes. Survive till evening. It'll be cool then, and I'll be able to think again, figure things out.

The faint cry of a female passenger opens his eyes, and he stands up stiff. "You there,' he says pointing with his revolver at the man seated next to her. "Get her out of here. I do not want to see her weak face. I do not want to see her. Take her out now!"

The man, with white hair and slightly wrinkled skin, pats the woman's hand. She is younger, dark hair and dark skin. Finally, she comes to.

He looks at them. Is this his daughter or his wife? She is too young for him, but he touches her like she is his wife. He has money. Too much money. That is what she wants. His money. He is too old. He levels the revolver at the old man's head. "Get out!" he screams at the pair, "Get out before I kill you."

Together, the two struggle out of their seat and down the aisle to the door. The terrorist does not watch them as they hurry down the ramp and run across the tarmac to the terminal.

The official straightens up in defiance. "What have we done to deserve this treatment?"

"What have you done?" the

terrorist repeats, then thinks, I cannot believe he can ask in such innocence. His army burned down my village. None of us belonged to the revolution. We never fed or sheltered them. When we told the officers that, they laughed and did not believe us. They said we lied, lied to save ourselves. He stares at the official. "Open your eyes to our life, to life around, and you will see."

"But I have done nothing," the official states.

"That is half true. You have done nothing to help, but you have done much to harm. You take away and take away, giving nothing." He pants, his lungs cannot suck enough oxygen out of the stifling air. "I should kill you!" he screams, shaking his revolver. "Kill all of you!" The gun fires into the air.

A ringing silence falls. Nothing moves save the futile rise and fall of the terrorist's chest. Finally, he mutters to himself, "But I am just one, I cannot kill you all. You gnaw like rats and you should all die like rats, caught in the trap of your own greed." He points the revolver at the official and tightens his grip, squeezing until the white of bone and tendon stands out.

The official begins to shake. "Take it easy," the official says as he rubs his palms together. "We are meeting your demands. Things will work out."

He is beginning to sweat, the terrorist thinks. The heat is tearing into him, too. We will all sweat. If he makes me sit here, water pouring out, I can do the same to him. He will suffer to, and in the end, he will die. I must watch him, cannot let the heat exhaust me. I cannot get enough air, more air, air. The terrorist pants, trying to breathe deep. I hate him. I hate his government. I hate this country. I must get out of this plane. Out of this country. Just out, out. Out into the hills where they cannot follow me.

"Are you all right?" the official asks.

"Shut up!" the terrorist screams. "Silence! I won't listen to any of your lies. Like a balloon, you are puffed up with lies, deadly lies. Swelled to bursting. You will pay, you will pay. Damned government. You have no right to rule us. You cannot even rule yourselves. You are corrupt. You lie and steal, cheat and murder all in the name of the people."

"You say that we are bad. But can you prove it?"

"Have you no eyes? If you did, you would not need proof. Just look at this country, outside of the city. Look at the people, my people, the little people." Fading pictures and oxygenless air choke off the terrorist's words. He does not understand. How could he? We live in worlds separated by barren fields. Now, nothing grows. Crops cannot survive a battle. Futile, all life is futile. He stares at the official.

"Do you really think that terrorism will solve the problems that plague this country?'

"I have a choice?" the terrorist asks.

"How many of your people will my death feed?"

"Then tell me," the terrorist growls, hair rising in the back of his neck. "How

can I help my people?"

"Put down your weapons and let us help you. This fighting is expensive, and we cannot afford to fight you and help you at the same time."

"You will help us?" he questions, picturing the people that he had grown up with. He growls, then spits against the official. Saliva rolls slowly down the front of the official's shirt.

"Terrorism will not help you or your people."

"It will not hurt. Nothing can hurt us now," he answers, slowly sliding down to the floor. He rubs the sweat off his forehead again, then stares at his revolver. He shifts it to his other hand and says half-muffled, "Anyway, what choice do I have?"

"We will not work with terrorists," the official says, rising from his seat. "We will work only with those who are willing to work with us. We cannot work with the violent." His voice grows louder. "It is not right." He flings these last words into the terrorist's face, "for you to threaten these innocent people."

The terrorist rises to meet the challenge. "It might not be right, but you are not right either." He leans into the official. "I do not choose this weapon because I think that it's is right, but I choose it because it's the only weapon my hand can still grasp."

A child begins to whimper like a puppy lost in a strange wood, and her mother bursts into hysteric sobs.

"Get them out!" the terrorist screams. "Get them out of my sight. All of you, get out! I am sick of your stupid faces staring at me like I am some kind of strange beast displayed at the carnival."

The hostages stare at the disheveled figure performing before them and start to rise.

He waves his gun. "No! Sit down. All of you sit down. She can leave. Just the woman and the child. Go! Get out. The rest of you stay. You keep them from killing me."

The official starts to rise while the terrorist speaks, but the terrorist motions him back into the seat. The woman stands up, holding the child, and they hurry off the plane and disappear into the terminal.

"You will not be so lucky," he says to the official. He sinks back down to the floor before continuing. "You planted a seed with your actions, now you can begin your harvest."

"You," the official begins as he stands up, chose terror as a way of life, and you," he says jabbing his finger at the terrorist's face, "will suffer. It was your choice. You cannot blame us. It will cost you and the price will be high."

"Yes," the terrorist looks up and says, "the price is high, but the fruit is worth the price."

"You are willing to die?"

"Life means little to me and my people," he says as the heat pushes his down further like a foot on his throat. "Because we have very little." This man will not understand, the terrorist thinks. This talking will not help. But they force us out of the lives that we know. They force their world upon us. He stops thinking and begins to fan himself with his empty hand. This government that grew up in the city, they are just too

different, too strange for us. When will they learn? We cannot teach them, we have tried. I must get out. Maybe after dark. After dark, night will hide me. Hide in the grass, sneak up to the hills. Maybe. He looks at the official. "I choose death because it helps my people live."

But your actions hurt your people. They will--"

"Shut up! the terrorist yells. He aims the revolver barrel. "Or I will kill you now. I give my people hope,. I give them something to look for, to live for. Do you not know that you are a fool? Do you not know that you are now staring at your own death. I am death, I am your death. We will die together." Suddenly he becomes quiet. He looks deep into the official's eyes. "I will kill you." He looks down at the floor and giggles.

"We are meeting all your demands," the official says, his voice almost cracking. "Why should you want to kill me?"

The terrorist continues laughing. Then suddenly he stops. "You will soon see. You know what is out there waiting for me." Again he laughs. "I will die, and just as surely, you will also die."

Everyone is silent. Both men sit with their thoughts, muddled by the heat, while the hostages sit and wait.

The official speaks. "I do not understand you. Why trade your life for certain death?"

"I cannot die because I am dead already. I do not live. I am dead. Not really dead, but living death. Dying slowly each day. I choose to trade my death for life."

"Don't throw away your only chance. Take your problems through proper channels."

"Proper channels do not work for us," he sneers. No one listens to the weak voice of the dying."

"There are peaceful methods--"

"Shut up about peace!" the terrorist yells. "It is just another way you have of keeping us from upsetting your magnificent towers. The peaceful die slowly, the violent, in a rush."

The official opens his mouth to speak but the terrorist will not let him.

"Shut up. Do not try to talk to me. You do not know who I am or why I am here. You can never truly understand until you see the way that I see. That is why I am here. To make you see."

"I see better than you might think. I grew up in the hills, too. I moved to the city to attend the University and then began to work for the government. This city is little different than the hills. There are rich and poor in both, no difference. We really do understand you and we really wish that you would let us do more, but with the fighting, we cannot. Nothing is safe until the fighting ends." He stares at the terrorist's crumpled figure.

The terrorist jerks his head up, and through wet eyes sobs, "You call me friend. You buy men to sell their friends and spy for you. You take everything away from them so that they must work for you. You who will kill me when you can. You call me friend and wonder why I do not listen, do not believe."

"Just shut up," he says, standing back up to his full height. "You are dead." His face breaks into a wide grin.

"But we are giving you everything that you want."

"That is what you say."

"What are you doing?" the official asks as the terrorist takes a grenade from inside his shirt and pulls the pin. He smiles as he tosses the pin onto the floor.

"I am no prophet, but I do know what will happen." He looks into the official's eyes and thinks, he knows that he is dead now. He is squirming. "Do I scare you?" Does this scare you? Before, you knew that I was dead, but now you know that you and some of these people will die, too. I did not want to die alone. Together, we will walk out into the light or into the darkness."

"Please just wait. The men that you asked for will be here soon, and then you will be able to fly anywhere you want."

"You do not believe that any more than I do. You never give, because if you give, you appear soft and my people will demand more. We will no longer fear you. You feed on fear, and without that fear, you will soon starve."

The official points to the hostages. "Is that how you rationalize murdering these innocent souls?"

"Tell me," the terrorist screams, "how do you rationalize your murders?"

"We do not kill innocent men. We execute the guilty."

"The homeless old man, the starving boy, the violated girl. They are all guilty and being punished? You do not always kill with bullets, but cold hunger and humiliation kill just as well." He clutches his stomach, doubles over and vomits into the corner. He pants. Exhausted.

"So many things that I could do," he mutters, wiping his mouth with his sleeve. "You allow all except life. I cannot live, none of my people live anymore." He falls silent and stares out the window to the black pavement and the empty terminal. He sees no one. He smiles though as the sun dips below the top of the terminal. It will be night soon, he thinks. "If that is true, why did you let me board?"

His grin grows wide as he passes the grenade from hand to hand. "I care little for these rabbits. It is you that I want." he says, then smiles again. Maybe, he thinks, late tonight I can escape. In the dark. I will get nothing. Escape. No. They must have dogs. They will hunt me down. They will not let me live. I'll die and this man will die with me. He must die.

The official starts to speak, stops, then starts again. "There is a way that you can get out of this."

The terrorist looks up.

"You are partly right. We have no intentions of letting you leave with the money and your friends. They are criminals and will be executed for their crimes. But if you deal with us, promise to work for us, you may and we will pay you. You said before that we have many men working for us in the countryside, and even some in the movement itself. We knew that you would be here today and that is why we were ready. A friend sold you to us. We will not release the criminals that you asked for,

but we can give you money if you promise to work for us."

"I could not sell my friends."

"One of your friends sold you. And what choice do you have? You will either work for us or die. Life or death. Are you really ready to die?" He paused for a moment. "The money you want is sitting in the terminal right now. Promise to give us information and you can fly out of here with that money."

The terrorist sits silently, thinking. "What if I run?"

"That is a chance that we are willing to take. Planes, equipment, and men are expensive to repair and replace. Information is worth a lot of money to us.

"If I go back, the rebels will get the money that they need to keep fighting."

"We know that, but it is worth the information."

The terrorist thinks slowly about himself and his people.

"You must decide."

"I must fight for my people," the terrorist thinks.

"You will not win."

"I will fight."

"You cannot win."

"I must help free my people."

"You are trapped."

"I cannot give up."

"You cannot win."

"I must win."

"You will die."

"I must fight for my people."

"Give up."

"I cannot give up."

"Give up!"

The terrorist stops, and looks out the window. Two men have stepped out of the door and stand next to the wall of the terminal. "My friends. You are releasing my friends."

The official shrugs. "We have little choice. You are criminals, but we will not risk the lives of the hostages.

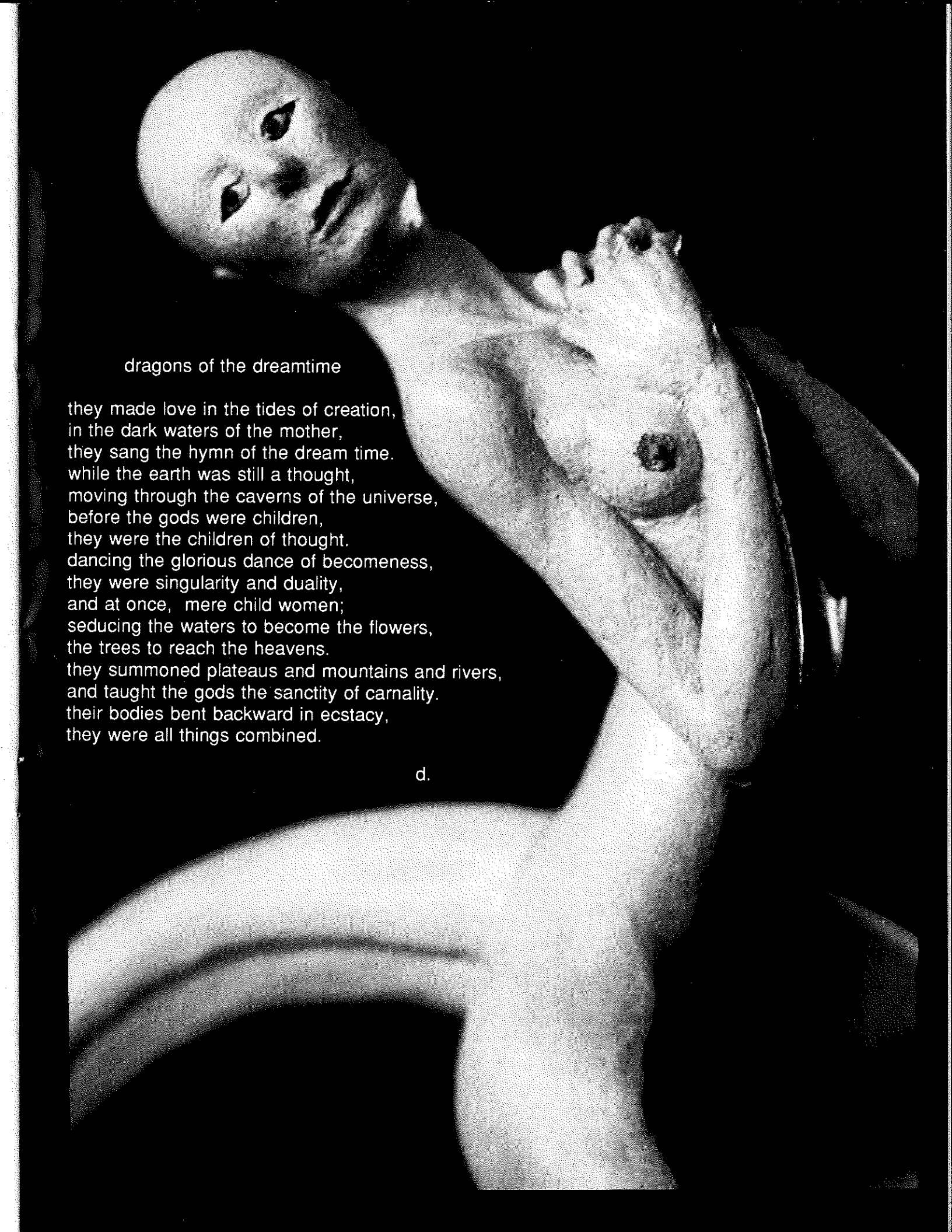
"We have won! We have won." He strides down the aisle toward the door, and looks out. He waves , but the pair does not wave back. They must not have seen me, he thinks. He walks out farther and waves again. This time they look up and see him, but still they do not wave.

A silhouette appears on top of the terminal. It fires.

The terrorist sees the shadow, but is unable to move. He raises a fist clenching the grenade as the bullet sinks into his chest. The force knocks him back into the plane, and the grenade clatters to the floor. The official leaps ahead and scoops it up and out the door in one quick motion, where it explodes harmlessly.

The terrorist lies crumpled on the floor.

Steve Brahlek



dragons of the dreamtime

they made love in the tides of creation,
in the dark waters of the mother,
they sang the hymn of the dream time.
while the earth was still a thought,
moving through the caverns of the universe,
before the gods were children,
they were the children of thought.
dancing the glorious dance of becomeness,
they were singularity and duality,
and at once, mere child women;
seducing the waters to become the flowers,
the trees to reach the heavens.
they summoned plateaus and mountains and rivers,
and taught the gods the sanctity of carnality.
their bodies bent backward in ecstacy,
they were all things combined.

d.



EYE OF THE MIDDLE EARTH

Eye of the Middle Earth
Beckons forth the soul
From its slumbering depths
With yellow-gold stripped butterflies
Flittering in the night.

Blue green swirls
Eternally 'round the iris,
Blinking thrice and issuing
Light whispers to the wakening soul
That half rises from winter sleep.

Void deep pupils
Reflect sunken lakes
With turquoise springs bubbling up
And flowing down to lost seas
That release the soul,

Up, from its emerald bed
Up, from its swirling dreams
Up and out
To the gold white brightness
Of the rising sun.

Carolyn Martin



terra limbo

a pile of bones,
a river of blood,
unconscious and dying,
eyes turned toward the heavens;
i walked through the valley of death,
through the fogs and shadows of wisdom,
by the caves of creation,
where eden's children stretched their necks to look,
making ghostly, giddy greetings,
as if they knew me,
as if they were waiting,
for me to arrive...

i flew that night,
on dragon's wings,
to the river of language,
and was tended by poets,
who were sitting on rocks,
in billowy blouses,
smiling cream colored smiles...

what hung in the air that night,
was not the light of heaven,
but an eggshell pelvis,
and a gothic moon,
illuminating terra limbo.

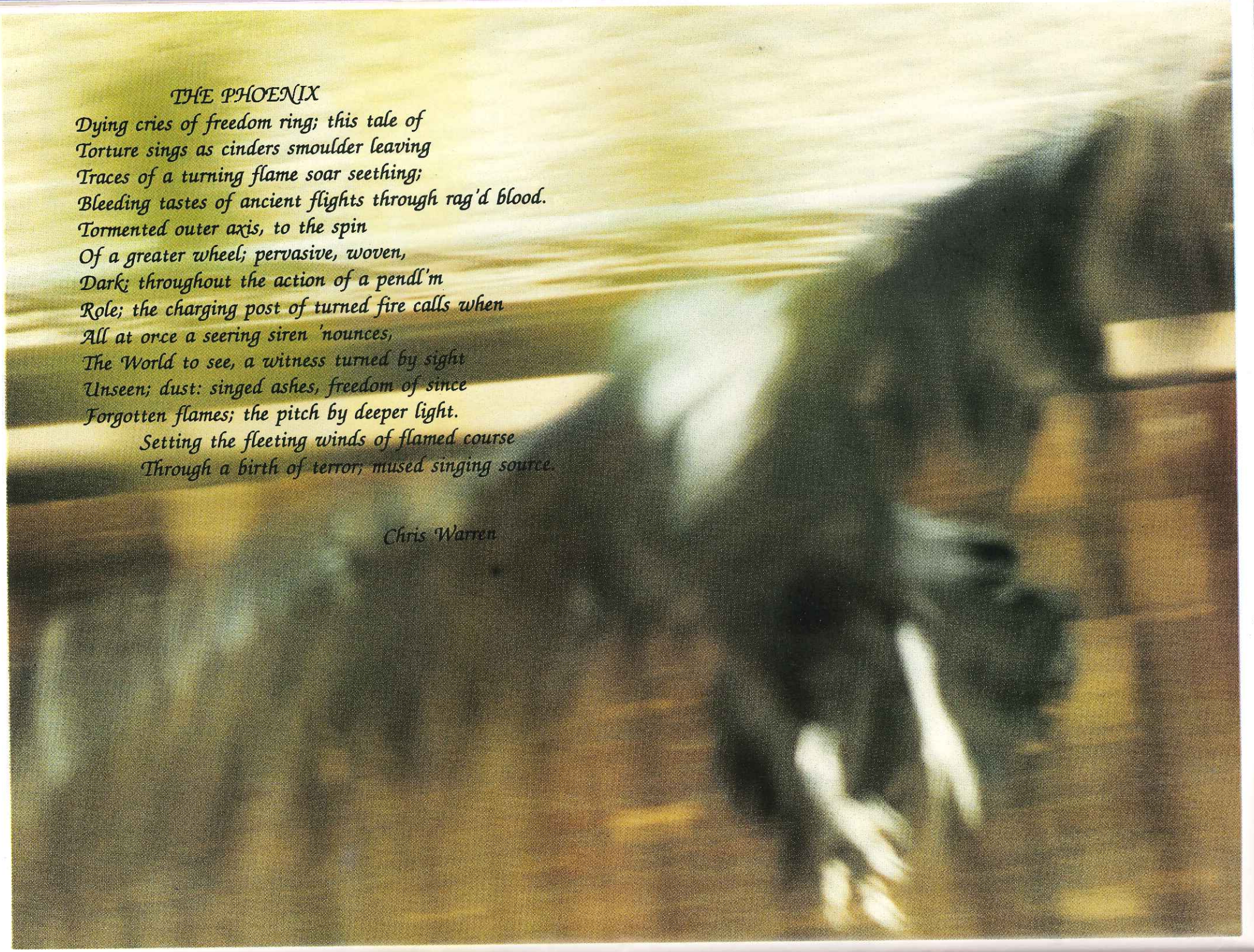
in the pure silence,
a still moisture,
settled on our cheeks;
the mad lord smiling,
shelley reclining,
ghostly over the whispering waters...

my dream kingdom,
wasn't one of angels,
and trumpets,
or vaporous beds of light,
...no,

mine was a world,
of emerald salamanders,
and creator beasts,
who wove ruby webs,
of the frost that gathered,
on the petals of blue roses.
my hymns were the verses of dead men,
floating in skies of grammar,
in the winter world,
beyond the satyr-filled glades,
of more idyllic genres...

"this is the cup of our blood" they said,
"the blood of the new and everlasting covenant,
the elixir of a half-life,
sipped from the wrought iron chalice of poetry..."
"now you see death,
a jester in a tasseled cap,
eat of the loaf of the half-death,
child, and touch the chiseled moon;
before the third howling of the wolf,
before snow falls on yonder mountains,
before you go back to bone and blood and bowel..."

dorothy block



THE PHOENIX

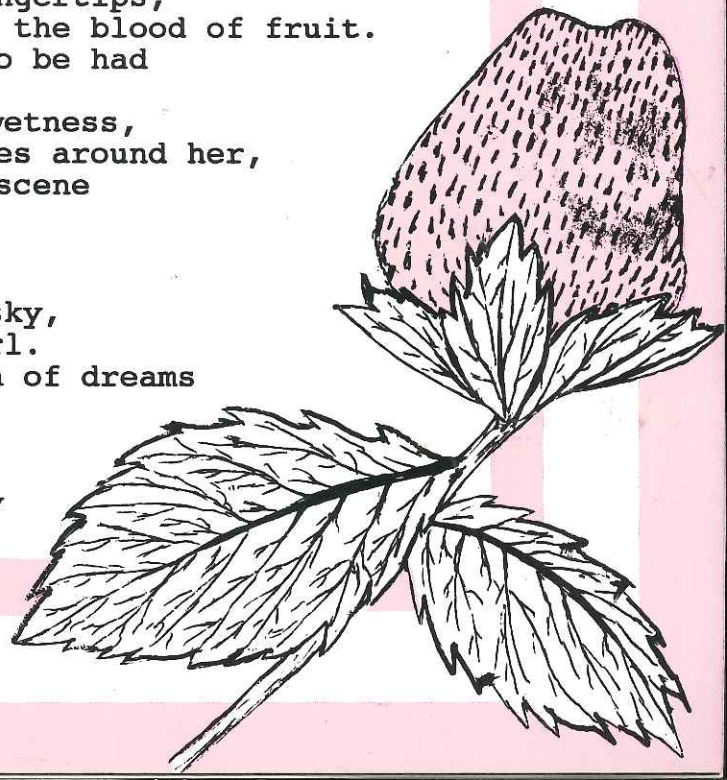
Dying cries of freedom ring; this tale of
Torture sings as cinders smoulder leaving
Traces of a turning flame soar seething;
Bleeding tastes of ancient flights through rag'd blood.
Tormented outer axis, to the spin
Of a greater wheel; pervasive, woven,
Dark; throughout the action of a pendl'm
Role; the charging post of turned fire calls when
All at orce a seering siren 'nounces,
The World to see, a witness turned by sight
Unseen; dust: singed ashes, freedom of since
Forgotten flames; the pitch by deeper light.
Setting the fleeting winds of flamed course
Through a birth of terror; mused singing source.

Chris Warren

Strawberry Sunset

brown-eyed girl
picking strawberries
in the sunset of summer.
her swirling hair is auburn waves
in the sea of air.
fiery rays shatter the sky around her head
(fireworks - golden red, crimson blue... violet rapture).
she bends down into the straight-lined emerald harvest
and the succulent berries cascade into her skirt.
in the misty aroma of sweetness and reveries,
she is a goddess unkissed.
the sun dangles on its last strands
in the middle of the sighing rubied dusk and screaming amber haze.
soon it will enfold all this redness and raw rhapsody,
gather it all into memory, like strawberries in the body.
all this rich glory to be left to a forgetful mind -
recaptured only in muted aftertaste.
she laughs and licks the juice from her fingertips,
ethereal vision unstained by the moist black earth or the blood of fruit.
there is something about her that aches to be had
(elusive perfection)
she smiles, parted lips glistening with wetness,
not noticing the purple shadows lacing themselves around her,
weaving an abrupt finale to a newborn scene
that nature will never redo.
she turns away.
the sun collapses - breathlessly.
deep-throated darkness swallows the sky,
the field, the strawberries, the girl.
all lies serene for eternities in the stomach of dreams

Kelly Henry





Sky Theater
A Morning Production

Dark and light struggle to win
Mastery of the sky's stage.
Rain drifts like gauze in the southeastern wings;
Thunder's great bass rolls in rage.

Wind shifts the curtain of night,
Hushing the rustle and buzz.
Cumulus rears his black crest overhead,
Challenging all as he does.

Meanwhile an upstart steps up:
Gleaming, sharp spear pokes and prods.
Light reams huge holes in the villain of black--
Marching as swift as the gods.

Great shafts of light soar away;
Columns of gold rise to blue.
Awesome the dawning, as Light takes the wreath,
Easily winning his due.

Mary Crawley



CHILDHOOD RECAPTURED

There is a walled garden, atop a high mountain
That's washed by a warm and a whispering sea
And deep in the garden, a tree with great branches
Where flame-colored birds sing of how life should be
They sing of the days when you soared upon wings
When life was a maze of kaleidoscope summers and springs
When lemongrass meadows were limegolden green
And minstrels and princes were proud to be seen
In the company of maidens like you
When growing up seemed like a haze in your eyes
A ladder you climbed into cloud-dizzy skies
Disappeared...

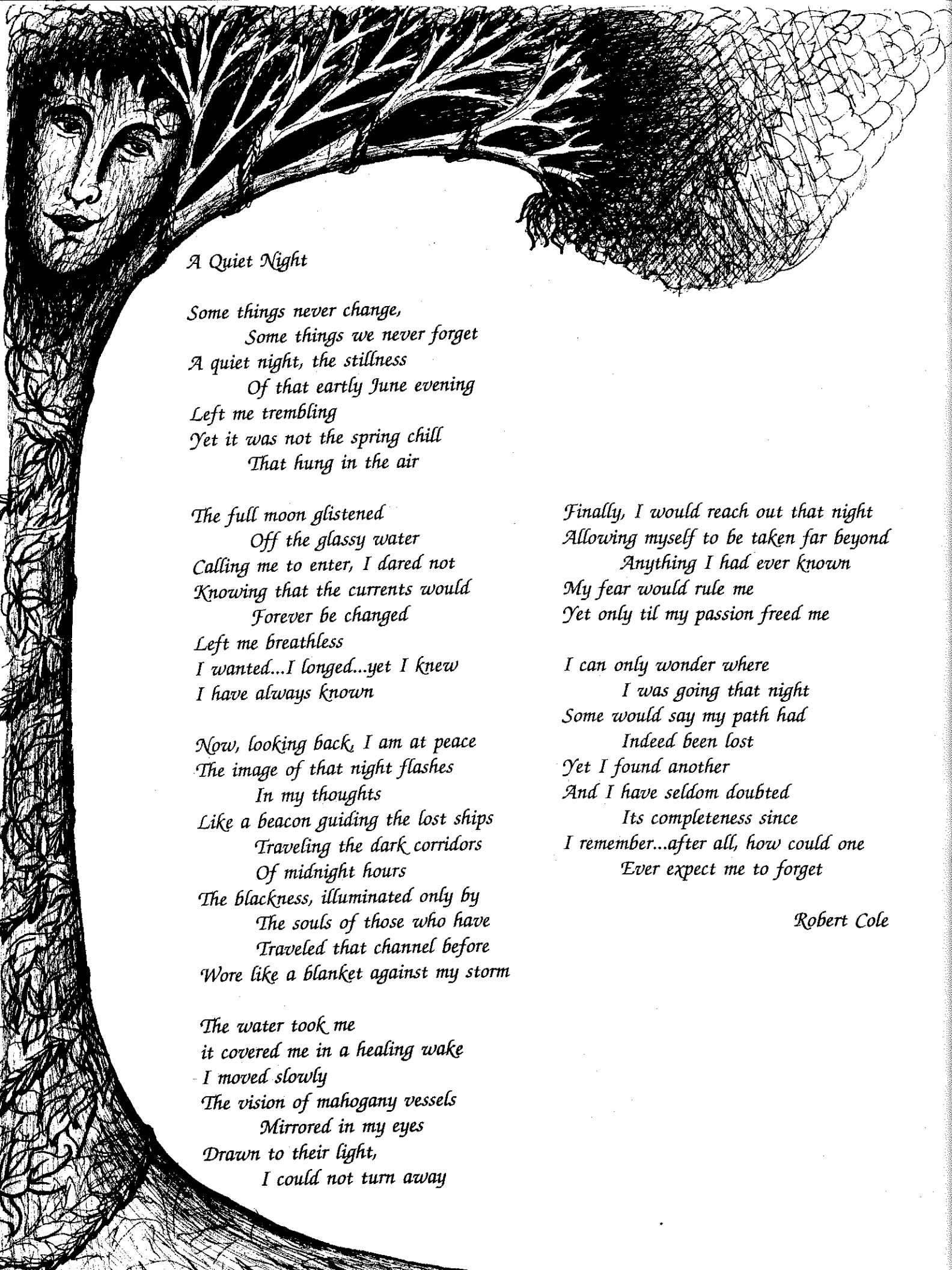
You lived in glass castles surrounded by moats
And fished crystal waters in glass-bottomed boats
Slew scaly dragons with gorgon-eyed heads
And slept with your loved ones on red cedar beds
The centaurs and gryphons all danced to the tunes
Of seaweed-clad mermaids in saffron lagoons
And leprechauns strummed on their lutes and their lyres
While unicorns pranced around phoenix-fed fires
Then one day, no longer a haze in your eyes
You climbed up that ladder through cloud-dizzy skies
Disappeared...

Older, you've learned there are hooks in the air
That tear at your flesh, that catch in your hair
Sadder, you've learned that the streets run with blood
And no one knows why it's well understood
That it's Life
You look down the years with a mist in your eyes
And all you remember are could-dizzy skies
Disappeared...

The years race away, there's a child on your knee
A symbol of all that has been and will be
A seed that was heated, expanded and grew
And that someone who's special is pleading with you
"Read to me, Mommy, O read me some tales
Of witches and warlocks and wizards and whales
Read to me, Mommy, just us by ourselves
Of faeries and gypsies and tinkers and elves!"
You look at your young one with joy in your eyes
For all that was hidden by cloud-dizzy skies
Reappears...

She'll lead you again up those storybook trails
Where the green winds of childhood once billowed your sails
And you knew all the wonders a young girl can see
That now are concealed by the leaves on your tree
So climb with her, rhyme with her, up through the mist
To levels of lifting where seagulls have kissed
Magically, Musically, drifting along
Lost in the oceans of air we call song
...And there's the walled garden, atop a high mountain
And it's washed by a warm and a whispering sea
And deep in the garden, a tree with great branches
Where flame-colored birds sing of how life should be

Owen Murphy



A Quiet Night

Some things never change,
Some things we never forget
A quiet night, the stillness
Of that eartly June evening
Left me trembling
Yet it was not the spring chill
That hung in the air

The full moon glistened
Off the glassy water
Calling me to enter, I dared not
Knowing that the currents would
Forever be changed
Left me breathless
I wanted...I longed...yet I knew
I have always known

Now, looking back, I am at peace
The image of that night flashes
In my thoughts
Like a beacon guiding the lost ships
Traveling the dark corridors
Of midnight hours
The blackness, illuminated only by
The souls of those who have
Traveled that channel before
Wore like a blanket against my storm

The water took me
it covered me in a healing wake
I moved slowly
The vision of mahogany vessels
Mirrored in my eyes
Drawn to their light,
I could not turn away

Finally, I would reach out that night
Allowing myself to be taken far beyond
Anything I had ever known
My fear would rule me
Yet only til my passion freed me

I can only wonder where
I was going that night
Some would say my path had
Indeed been lost
Yet I found another
And I have seldom doubted
Its completeness since
I remember...after all, how could one
Ever expect me to forget

Robert Cole